THE REHEARSAL.

1. The *Flying Poſt* ſtrikes at the *Church* of *England*, through the Sides of the *Church* of *Scotland*. And Advances the *Popiſh* Arguments againſt *Both*.
2. And *Ruins* the *Kirk* too, into the Bargain. And all the *Reformed* Churches Abroad.
3. An *Anſwer* to the *Popiſh* Arguments, Urg'd by the *Flying Poſt*.
4. That *Eraſtianiſm*, *Sacrilege*, or even *Idolatry* do's not *Un-Church*.
5. The *Church* cannot *Give up* her *Rights*.
6. The *Flying Poſt* deſir'd to ſpeak to the laſt *Topick* now left him againſt the *Church* in *Scotland*.

WEDNESDAY, *May* 29th. 1706.

(1.) *Rehearſal.* I ſhew'd you in my Laſt, how the *Flying Poſt* has Endeavour'd to *Un-Church* the *Epiſcopal Church* in *Scotland*, by means of the *Aſſertory Act*. I will now go on, and Diſcover to you the Bottom of this *Deſign*. It is, to *Un-Church* the *Church* of *England* too; againſt which he Levels his *Arguments*, through the Sides of the *Church* of *Scotland*. And he makes uſe of all the *ROMAN Artillery* againſt Both. He Revives their Old *Objection*, That ours is a *Parliamentary Religion*, and that we have no other than a *Parliamentary Church*. And the *Act* of *Submiſſion* in the 25th of K. *Hen.* VIII. being built upon the *Submiſſion* of the *Clergy* themſelves in *Convocation*, wherein they gave up all their *Right* to *Meet* or *Convene*, or to make any *Canons* or *Rules* for the Government of the *Church*, without the *Royal Licence*, operated more ſtrongly againſt them, than can be Alledg'd from the *Aſſertory Act*, which being only an *Act* of *Parliament*, might be Carry'd againſt the *Votes* of all the *Biſhops* there, who are but 14. Beſides that the *Biſhops* in *Parliament* are no proper *Repreſentation* of the *Church*, they ſitting there only as *Barons*, and by pure *Lay-Authority*. But the *Papiſts* do not love to object that *Act* of *Submiſſion* againſt us, becauſe it was before the Beginning of the *Reformation*, and they were All *Popiſh Biſhops* and *Clergy* who made that *Submiſſion*, and therefore they are Anſwerable for it. But now the *Flying Poſt* has help'd them to new Arguments, and wou'd Infer, That by the *Aſſertory Act* the *Biſhops* in *Scotland* have *Diveſted* themſelves of all *Power* as *Biſhops*, and *own'd* they had *no other than a Lay-Authority*. Which Argument, if it be Good, will operat more ſtrongly againſt the *Church* of *England*. For ſhe is ſtill kept under the *Act* of *Submiſſion*. Whereas the *Scots Biſhops* and *Clergy* did Refuſe the *Teſt* that was Fram'd to the ſame intent as that *Act* of *Submiſſion*; And obtain'd ſuch a *Declaration* of the *Inherent Rights* of the *Church*, as has not (that I know of) been obtain'd from the *King* and *State* in *England*. And if Submitting to *Lay Deprivation* do's *Un-Church*, as the *Flying-Poſt* do's Urge it againſt the *Biſhops* in *Scotland*; It is Eaſy to ſee how that will operat as to *England*. And let any one Judge, whether the moſt ſpitefull *Jeſuit* in the World cou'd have offer'd a more *Stabbing Blow* againſt the *Church* of *England*? And what the *Conſequence* wou'd be, if this *Doctrin* ſhou'd Prevail among us!

Country-m. This makes Good, *Maſter*, what you have often told me, That theſe *Diſſenters*, while they *Rail* at *Popery*, are the very *Engines* of *Popery*, and ſet up its *Principles* and *Doctrins* among us, and help them to *Batter* the *Church* of *England*.

If they do it on Purpoſe, they are *Knaves*. And if they ſee it not, they are *Fools*. And it is all one whether I am Ruin'd by a *Knave* or a *Fool*. I muſt *Guard* againſt *Both*.

(2.) But, *Maſter*, you have ſhew'd Plainly in your Laſt, That if this *Argument* of theirs be Good againſt the *Church*, it overthrows the *Kirk* too. Are not they *Fools* then to ſet it up?

Rehearſ. May be they did not ſee it. For there is nothing *Blinds* like *Malice*. And there are ſome Men who wou'd *Hurt* themſelves, that they might be *Revenge'd* upon others!

Country-m. I am very Glad, *Maſter*, that you put in that *Salvo* in your Laſt, for the *Proteſtant Churches* Abroad. For it fortifies your Argument ſtrongly againſt the *Kirk* in *Scotland*, and all our *Diſſenters* here.

Rehearſ. But their *Argument* wou'd Deſtroy the *Proteſtant Churches* Abroad, as well as *Themſelves* Here. For it *Eraſtianiſm* and *Lay-Deprivation* do's *Un-Church*, as the *Flying Poſt* urges it againſt the *Biſhops* in *Scotland*; what then will become of moſt of the *Reformed Churches* Abroad, eſpecially in *Holland*?

Country-m. Theſe men, if let alone, wou'd Deſtroy the whole Earth, and leave no *Government* ſettl'd either in *Church* or *State*, their *Principles* allow of None, of no *Settlement*, but Eternal *Rolling* and *Tumbling* about, from

one

one thing to another? And their *Malice* is so Great, that they wou'd Pull down the *Church*, tho they shou'd be *Bury'd* in its *Ruins!*

(3.) But, *Master*, since you have set down the *Arguments* of these men, in favour of *Popery*, it is fit you shou'd say something to it, lest you be Suspected of *Popery* too.

Rehears. I say *Country-man*, in Opposition to these Men, that every *Erastianism* do's not *Un-Church*. And that it it did, it wou'd be as Fatal to the *Church* of *Rome* as to us. For the *Kings* and *Princes* of her *Communion* Dispose of *Bishops* and *Churches* by vertue of their *Regale*. And the *Erastianism* of the *Court* of *Rome* Exceeds that of all others. Whereby the *Pope* takes upon him to Dispose of all the *Bishops* and *Churches* in the *World*, and of all their *Revenues*. He, as Supreme *Treasurer* of the *Church*, has *Sold* their *Patrimony* the *Tithes* to *Lay-Princes* and others. Insomuch that I have been told by *Roman-Catholicks* that have liv'd long at *Rome*, there is not one bit of *Tithe* in all *Italy* now left for the *Clergy*. And in *England* there is no *Tithe* that is *Impropriated* to *Lay-Man*, but what was first taken from the *Secular Clergy*, by the *Pope*, and *Appropriated* to his *Life-Guard* of *Regulars*, their *Monasteries* and *Religious Houses*. So that they can ill Object *Sacrilege* or *Erastianism* to us.

(4.) These things make Great *Inroads* upon the *Church*, but do not *Un-Church* or *Un-Priest*. No, not *Idolatry* it self. Into which *Aaron* fell, yet was *High-Priest* still. The whole *Nation* of the *Jews*, both *Priests*, *Princes*, and *People* fell often into *Idolatry*, yet were the only *Visible Church* then upon *Earth*, and *God's* Peculiar *People*, because with them were the *Covenant* and the *Promises*, And tho' they often Broke this *Covenant*, yet *God* did not utterly *Forsake* them. *Yea, when they had made them a Molten Calf, and said, This is thy God that brought thee up out of Egypt, and had wrought great Provocations; yet Thou in Thy manifold Mercies, forsookest them not in the Wilderness; the Pillar of the Cloud Departed not from them by Day, to Lead them in the way, neither the Pillar of Fire by Night, to shew them Light, and the way wherein they shou'd go. Thou gavest also thy good Spirit, to Instruct them; and with-heldest not thy Manna from their Mouth, and gavest them Water for their Thirst. Yea forty years didst thou sustain them in the Wilderness, so that they lacked Nothing, their Cloaths waxed not Old, and their Feet swelled not. Moreover thou gavest them Kingdoms and Nations*, &c. Neh. ix. 18. &c.

So that the Influence of the *Holy Spirit* of *God*, and even *MIRACULOUS Sustenance* and *Preservation* may go along with His *Church*, even when she Labours under Great *Errors* and *Corruptions*, as of *Erastianism*, *Sacrilege*, and *Idolatry* it self.

Will a Man Rob GOD? says *God* by his *Prophet*, *Mal.* iii. 8. *Yet ye have Robbed Me. But ye say, wherein have we Robbed THEE? In Tithes and Offerings. Ye are Cursed with a Curse, even this whole Nation.* Here the *Whole Nation* was Involv'd. Yet they were still the *Holy Nation*, and *Peculiar People* because God's *Covenant* was with them. They were a *Cursed Nation*, that is, Lyable to the *Curse* of *God*, for their *Breach* of his *Covenant*. But they were the *Holy Nation* still, because of the *Covenant*.

A man may be *Sick*, and may *Recover*. A *Leprous-Man* is a *Man*. The *Church* has Spots, like the *Moon*, her *Waxing* and her *Waning*, her *Light* and her *Darkness*. Yet it is the same *Moon* still.

The *Church* may be *Over-Run* with *Errors*, as a *Garden* with *Weeds*. But it is the *Garden* still, and may be *Cleansed* by faithful *Labourers*.

(5.) The *Church* may *Sinfully* give way to *Error*, and suffer her *Rights* to be *Torn* or *Stolen* from her. But she cannot *Give* them up. And the *Grant* is *Void*, if she did. They are a *Trust* Committed to her by *Christ*. And no *Trust* can be *Transfer'd*. She is still *Accountable* for the *Discharge* of that *Trust*. And cannot *Divest* her self of it, nor give it unto *Lay* hands.

I have said thus much, to give these men some *Notions*, who have no *Notion* at all of a *Church*; And to let them see, That though the *Scots Bishops* and *Clergy* had submitted to that *Test* Impos'd upon them, pursuant to the *Assertory Act*, without that *Saving* which they Obtain'd, to Secure the *Inherent Rights* of the *Church*; if they had done this as fully and Absolutely, as the *Popish Bishops* and *Clergy* did, in their *Submission* to K. *Henry* viii. Giving up all their Power to *Make* or *Consult*, though upon the most urgent *Necessities* of the *Church*, without the *Royal Licence*: Yet that this wou'd not have *Exauctorated* the *Scots Bishops*, or turn'd them into Meer *Lay-Men*, and to have no other than a *Lay-Authority*, as the *Flying Post* wou'd Infer from the *Supposition* of their having done so.

But the Matter of *Fact* having been Prov'd to be Quite otherwise, will leave him I suppose without any *Reply*.

(6.) And then his next *Topick* against the *Scots Bishops* and *Clergy* must be, How far an *Act* of *Parliament* can Alter the Nature of *Schism* in the *Church*; and make that to be *Schism*, which was *None* before, and that to be *no Schism* now, which was *Schism* before. Upon which I wou'd be glad to have his Thoughts.

Last *Rehearsal*, pag. 2. Col. 2. l. 35. r. *Clodius*.

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